

### **REMARKS**

#### **With regard to the claims:**

A new set of claims is submitted herewith taking into consideration all of the Claim Objections and Claim Rejections presented in the Office Action.

#### **With regard to the objections to Claims 1-3, 5 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. 112**

The phrase “every surface of the beams is either parallel or orthogonal to every other surface” has now been deleted. It is believed that there is now clarity that it is the subsystem which is referred to in present Claims 1-6. Claims 8-14 refer to the complete system including the beams, which are held together in this inventive manner.

#### **With regard to the objections to Claims 1 and 3 under 35 USC § 102 for lack of novelty:**

Reference is made to DE 3736266 (Neff et al.)

The claims have now been amended to clearly distinguish over the prior art according to Neff. Claim 1 now refers to each fixing plate having an inner planar surface and an outer planar surface parallel to said inner planar surface. This enables beams of rectangular cross section to be joined flat on and not tilted up on edge as shown in Neff. This clearly distinguishes from that disclosed in Neff. The Neff construction appears to attempt to exploit the increased bending moment available by putting the beams on edge. The present invention has an entirely different purpose which is to be as versatile as possible while using the same basic fixing plates and beams. By adhering to modular dimensions, it is possible to join together smaller and larger beams of rectangular cross section in many different combinations using a limited number of fixing plate dimensions. The use of these fixing plates will necessarily restrict the arrangement of the beams so that all of the beam surfaces are either parallel or orthogonal to every other surface. There can be no edge-up diamond shaped arrangement as in Neff, which is as was mentioned designed for another purpose. Module configurations are not possible in the Neff system.

Claims 8-14 claim the entire novel system including beams which are connected. The beams are of modular cross sectional dimensions (multiples of m) and can be combined and attached in a multitude of ways.

**With regard to the objections to Claims 2, 5 and 6 under 35 USC § 103 for obviousness:**

Claims 2, 3 5 and 6 are all ultimately dependent on Claim 1 which we maintain has novelty and is non-obvious over Neff, even in combination with US 5 873 564 (Bisch)

### **Conclusion**

The amended claims are now in agreement with §112 and claim novel and non-obvious subject matter.

In the event there are any questions concerning this Amendment, or the application in general, the Examiner is respectfully urged to telephone the undersigned so that prosecution of the application may be expedited.

No additional fees are believed to be due at this time beyond the two months extension fee and the fee for RCE. However if necessary to effect a timely response the Commissioner is authorised to deduct the necessary fees from Deposit account No. 501249.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: 7 May 2008